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ABSTRACT

Library historians and historians of literacy have been more creative than journalism historians in using individual-level historical data such as deeds, wills, depositions, surveys, and census figures to study reading behaviors of the past. For example, the series of family cost of living surveys conducted in the United States by state and federal bureaus of labor statistics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be of great use to journalism historians. These studies of working class family budgets include detailed information on family makeup, income, and expenditures--including expenditures on reading materials. A computer analysis of a sample of cotton textile worker budgets taken from an 1889-90 survey found that expenditures for newspapers were associated in interesting ways with family income, region of residence, ethnicity, and family life cycle. The analysis also found some evidence that working class families read newspapers more for diversion or amusement than for educational or self-improvement purposes. (FL)

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WORKING-CLASS READERS

Using Labor Statistics to Study Newspaper Readership in the Late Nineteenth Century

by

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WORKING-CLASS READERS

Using Labor Statistics to Study Newspaper Readership in the Late Nineteenth Century

Who read newspapers in the nineteenth century? Were readers different from non-readers? Was newspaper reading associated with differences in ethnicity, occupation, income, residence, age, family size, or other reader characteristics? Did newspaper reading make a difference in the life styles or world views of readers? These kinds of questions are central to our understanding of the newspaper as a social institution during the period of its genesis as a mass medium of communication. Yet we really don't know the answers. To some extent, answers to such questions can never be known. While many of the newspapers remain, preserved on microfilm, their faithful readers are dead, with no word left for posterity. This is part of the problem, of course. But much of the problem stems from the fact that few attempts have been made to seek answers. This paper is a modest effort to correct this deficiency. Specifically, I will try to show that most journalism historiography has been too limited in scope to create a broad social history of newspaper reading. I will suggest that the methods and approaches of other social histories could be quite useful in the study of newspaper history. And I will offer a description and a preliminary analysis of a collection of nineteenth-century data on working-class family budgets that suggest some tentative answers to the question: Who read newspapers in the nineteenth century?

II

There are two ways of studying newspaper readership. One can look at production or at consumption, at the producer and the product or at the audience. Journalism historians have almost always chosen the first approach, and newspaper history is thus the history of newspaper reporting, editing, and publishing. The late nineteenth century, when the modern mass-circulation newspaper was born, is usually portrayed as a time of great changes in newspaper content and style, printing technology, business strategy, and publishing methods in general. The historical actors are newspapermen of the highest rank -- Pulitzer, Hearst, Dana, and other journalism luminaries. The readers are not forgotten, but their characteristics are inferred from the aims of the editors and the content of the newspapers. Thus, for example, we know that the New York World was the paper of the workingman and the immigrant because Pulitzer tells us so. And those new readers must have liked human interest and sensation because that is what the World contained.[1] These inferences are quite plausible, but they are guesswork. Surely the tenuous link between the hunches of editors and the desires of readers was no stronger in the nineteenth century than it is today -- and it apparently is not very strong today.[2] More important, such inferences are very content-specific and tell us nothing about the broad social and behavioral characteristics of newspaper readers in general, especially compared to non-readers. The traditional approach has been only half of what should be a two-fold study. Journalism historians have studied producer and product. What about the audience, the reader himself?

III

Is it possible to study the characteristics of readers directly, or must we

be satisfied to infer reader attributes from communication content? Historians surely cannot conduct readership surveys among the dead. Or can they? Social historians in recent years have been remarkably successful in reconstructing the lives of common men and women of the past. They have begun to mine the great masses of individual, non-aggregated data that have been collected in most Western societies over the past two or three centuries -- manuscript censuses, wills, deeds, property inventories, depositions, marriage records, hospital records, military records, criminal records, government surveys, and so on.[3] The "new social history" ranges as widely in subject matter as the meaning of the term "social" itself, and some studies have dealt directly with "reading" and "readers." Researchers in library history and in the history of literacy have demonstrated that reading consumption, not just production, can be studied empirically and directly.

Traditional library history, like traditional journalism history, is usually more concerned with the production and distribution side of the reading process than with the consumption side. The standard works are institutional histories of libraries, publishing houses, the book trade, and the giants of librarianship. The characteristics and tastes of readers are inferred from the collection or circulation records of libraries or from the mere existence of libraries and the book trade in particular regions.[4] But some historians in this field have tried to study book ownership and reading behavior more directly through the analysis of probate records and other personal documents left behind by individual readers. Typically, readership studies in this "new library history" review hundreds, sometimes thousands, of seemingly unrelated estate inventories and then use this individual-level data to generalize about who read what at a particular place and time.[5] Like social historians working in other fields, library historians have learned to conduct surveys among the dead -- at least some kinds of surveys among some of the dead.

Historians of literacy, coming more from the tradition of education history than library history, have also begun to study their subject more directly through the use of individual-level records. Like practitioners of the new library history, these historians of literacy have been uncomfortable with traditional inferences about levels of literacy made from studies of the production of reading matter.[6] They have sought, instead, to study the reader or non-reader himself. There are two kinds of individual-level documents that American historians are using more and more to measure literacy in the past. The first type is the self-report on literacy or illiteracy, such as statements in manuscript census schedules and in military and job application records. The second type is the direct, if crude measure of literacy provided by the distinction between signing or marking a will, deed, property inventory, or deposition.

This latter approach to the study of literacy and illiteracy has been used to build wide-ranging arguments challenging traditional interpretations of the role of literacy in the industrial and democratic revolutions in the Western World in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[7] Because these masses of data were originally collected for individual people, the historian today is able to aggregate and analyze this material as he sees fit, through the use of modern statistical and computer techniques. Though the method is sometimes arcane, the aim is simple: to try to determine, as directly as possible, who could read and who could not.

Journalism historians who are interested in newspaper readership would benefit, I believe, were they to think of their subject in ways analogous to this recent work in library history and the history of literacy. In fact, in some ways the historical studies of literacy are directly relevant to journalism history, because the newspaper was likely one of the first media that marginally literate people would turn to. But beyond this direct connection, the example

of method is also suggestive. Are there historical sources extant that would allow us to study the readers of newspapers in the way historians have tried to study the readers of books or readers in general? The answer is a tentative "yes." While the reading of newspapers is a much more ephemeral enterprise than the reading of books (people usually don't leave bundles of newspapers in their estates to be inventoried and probated), newspaper reading is a behavior that has been recorded in some individual-level historical records. One such type of record is the family cost-of-living budget -- a favored form of statistical survey conducted by the newly created bureaus of labor statistics on both the state and national levels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

IV

The creation of bureaus of labor statistics, beginning with Massachusetts in 1869, was part of the passion of late-nineteenth-century reformers for "facts." The transformation of America from an agrarian and commercial nation to an industrial nation brought with it an avalanche of serious and immensely complicated economic and social problems. In their efforts to understand this strange new world, reformers and politicians sought help from the fledgling social sciences. Resolute in their faith in a scientific, factual basis for reform, they hoped to solve the great economic questions of the day through empirical investigations. No question was of greater concern than the so-called "Labor Question" -- the interlocking problems of labor productivity, unemployment, pay, hours, child labor, labor organization, social unrest, and so on. The first bureau of labor statistics was set up in Massachusetts in 1869; the Federal Bureau of Labor was established in 1884; and by 1891 twenty-seven state bureaus has been organized across the United States. In the words of Carroll

Wright, the chief of the Massachusetts bureau, this was "practical sociology" in action.[8]

Carroll D. Wright, who became the first U.S. Commissioner of Labor after his service in Massachusetts, was the leading figure in the development of labor statistics from 1873 until his death in 1909. One of Wright's most important contributions to labor statistics was his continuing effort to study empirically the cost of living of working-class families.[9] Wright's cost-of-living surveys, and those conducted by commissioners in several other states, gathered detailed information on family size, age, ethnicity, and work patterns; on family income from all sources; and on family expenditures of every sort, from potatoes to life insurance. The original purpose of these surveys was to study consumption and its relation to income, taking into account a variety of other family, industrial, and regional variables. Several of the federal studies were also designed to provide Congress with information during tariff debates.[10] Happily for historians, some of the studies were reported and published in non-aggregated form, thus leaving the raw survey data for posterity and posterity's computers to do with as they please, regardless of the original purposes of the nineteenth-century researchers. Happily for journalism historians, a variable commonly surveyed was expenditures for newspapers or newspapers and books.

Probably the most important cost-of-living surveys reported in non-aggregated form were published by Carroll Wright's bureaus in 1875 and in 1890 and '91.[11] The 1875 study, conducted while Wright was Massachusetts commissioner, was a survey of 397 working-class families in that state. Wright's agents purposely selected the sample to represent a range of occupations; within each occupation the individuals interviewed were selected more or less at random. The interviewers for all of Wright's surveys were trained, persistent, and meticulous, though the exact procedures they followed are not fully specified and certainly

did not guarantee a truly random sample in the modern sense of the term.[12] After he became U.S. Commissioner of Labor, Wright conducted a monumental replication of the Massachusetts survey -- a study of the budgets of more than 8,500 families all over the United States and in several foreign countries in selected industries. This study, conducted in 1889-90 and published in 1890-91, followed the 1875 study fairly closely in form and method. Though these surveys may be the best sources for historical cost-of-living data, they are by no means the only such sources. Wright conducted other studies, as did several state bureaus. Several of these have preserved very useful non-aggregated data just waiting for re-analysis in the computers of social historians.[13]

Oddly, only a few recent social and economic historians have made use of these historical surveys. In the 1960s, econometric historians Jeffrey Williamson used the data to study income elasticity in the nineteenth century. More recently, economic historians Peter Lindert and Michael Haines have used the surveys in their studies of fertility, child costs, and family life cycles. Social historian John Modell has looked into the differential consumption patterns of native compared to Irish immigrant workers and their families.[14] As far as I know, no one in journalism history has used these cost-of-living surveys to study newspaper reading behavior. The remainder of this paper will be a small step in this direction.

V

Wright's 1890-91 survey falls in the midst of one of the most extraordinary periods of American economic history. It is an extraordinary era in journalism history as well. Personified in the standard literature by the names of Joseph Pulitzer, E.W. Scripps, Melville Stone, William Rockhill Nelson, and Henry Grady, the decade of the 1880s is aptly remembered as the time of genesis of

the modern, popular, mass-circulation, urban newspaper in America.[15] The revolution in newspaper publishing in the 1880s ran deeply and broadly through American society, more so than the work of a handful of great editors would suggest. Nationwide, the number of daily newspapers increased 78 percent in the 1880s, from 971 to 1,731, and the percentage growth for evening papers -- the workingman's paper -- was even greater, 112 percent. Over the same decade the circulation of all dailies jumped 135 percent, from 3.6 million to 8.4 million per issue. And the papers circulated were fatter papers as well, as newsprint consumption rose nearly 200 percent. Altogether more than four and one-half billion copies of newspapers and periodicals were issued in 1890, a ten-fold increase from mid-century.[16]

Who was reading these papers in 1890? Carroll Wright's surveys suggest that newspaper reading was indeed a working-class activity, with some two-thirds of the families interviewed reporting at least some expenditures. What were these readers like? To find out, I turned to the non-aggregated cost-of-living data in the massive Seventh Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Labor, 1891.

My study of these working-class newspaper readers is based upon a stratified random sample of 300 cases drawn from the 1891 report.[17] In their original form, the data were already stratified by industry and state or country. Because the surveys were designed to generate a factual basis for the Congressional tariff debates, the industries studied were major protected industries of the time: bar iron, pig iron, steel, bituminous coal, coke, iron ore, cotton textiles, woolens, and glass. Wright organized the surveys by state and country, apparently with quotas set for each geographical division.[18] My sample consists of seventy-five families in cotton manufacturing from two states from each of the three major cotton-milling regions in the United States and from Great Britain: New England (Maine and Connecticut);

Middle Atlantic (New York and Pennsylvania); South (Georgia and South Carolina); and Britain. With seventy-five cases from each of these four geographical regions, the total sample was 300.

Because the industries originally surveyed were few in number and not randomly chosen by Wright, I decided to work with a single industrial group (cotton textile workers) in order to hold constant the effects related to industrial differences in hopes of facilitating comparison on other variables. (This study is only a pilot project for a larger study, which will include the other industrial groups.) Of the industries surveyed by Wright, cotton milling was the most fully represented, with more than 2,000 families interviewed in the United States alone. This allowed me to choose substantial sub-samples from the three major U.S. regions. Most industries tended not to be represented very well across regions. Cotton milling, on the other hand, was one of the most wide-spread of the major manufacturing industries in late-nineteenth-century America, having expanded well beyond the borders of New England where the first large mills had been built in the decades before the Civil War. Cotton manufacturing in the South, for example, made great strides after 1865 and was a major industry there by 1890.[19] Southern cotton manufacturing, like other industries in the so-called "New South," stood apart from manufacturing in the other regions in several ways, chiefly in the small scale and wide dispersion of firms and in the low pay for labor.[20]

Regional similarities and differences had an impact on reading behavior. Characteristics of the workers themselves and their families did, too. To find out what newspaper readers were like in the cotton textile industry, I looked at the relationship between expenditures for newspapers and books and five categories of family attributes: (1) income; (2) region of residence; (3) nationality of birth; (4) life cycle; and (5) personal and family life style.[21]

The average annual family income from all sources for the cotton workers in my sample was $665 per year, and the average expenditure for newspapers and books was $4.22. Family incomes ranged from $198 to $1,693, from bare subsistence or worse to a fairly comfortable living. Wages in cotton manufacturing were low for unskilled and semi-skilled operatives, especially women and children, but total family incomes were comparable to the other industries surveyed by Wright. Of those nine industries, four ranked above cotton textile work in average family income, four ranked below. By further comparison, average pay in the newspaper industry in 1890 (individual, not family) was $647, and Carroll Wright's own salary as commissioner of labor in Massachusetts was $2,500. Expenditures for newspapers and books ranged from zero to $40 per year in my sample -- also comparable to other industries in the full survey.[22]

Income, not surprisingly, was the most important single determinant of spending on newspapers. Of course, income is always an important determinant of any family expenditure, and newspapers and books are no exception. Generally speaking, then, as now, the more one earned, the most one spent. When the families in the sample are divided into equal thirds according to family income rank (high, middle, and low income), the highly paid workers spent on the average $6.14 per year on newspapers and books, the middle range workers spent $4.42, and the low paid workers spent $2.06. Expressed as proportions of family income, however, these expenditures are about equal. In other words, it appears that at all income levels, the <u>proportion</u> spent on newspapers and books was about the same -- about 0.6 percent of the total family income.[23] But this apparently simple linear relationship between income and reading expenditures is actually much more complex when other factors are considered. Newspaper buying was much more discretionary than many other family expenditures, and was thus quite variable. The simple Pearson coefficient of correlation between family income and expenditures on papers was only .36 in the sample, a fairly

modest positive correlation. A general overview of the relationship between family income and reading expenditures, therefore, does tell us something about newspaper use, but more importantly it masks the influence of two other family variables: region and nationality.[24]

Region of residence (New England, Middle Atlantic, or South) and nationality (native or immigrant) have contradictory influences on reading behavior that tend to cancel each other out. Table 1, for example, seems to show that neither region nor nationality had much effect on proportion of income devoted to newspapers and books. Table 2, on the other hand, suggests that this is a mistaken generalization, caused by the fact that virtually all of the Southern cotton workers were native Americans while most of the Northern cotton workers were immigrants. Table 2 indicates that, when income levels are controlled, natives tend to spend more on newspapers and books than immigrants do, and Northerners tend to spend more than Southerners. However, because most Southerners were natives and most Northerners were immigrants, the two effects wash each other out when considered together.[25]

What appear to be the most obvious effects of region on reading, suggested by Table 1, actually are income effects. The raw differences in expenditures on newspapers and books, broken down by region, are striking -- ranging from $6.05 per year in the Middle Atlantic states, to $3.81 in New England, to $2.92 in the South.[26] These differences, of course, reflect disparities in family income among the regions. Cotton workers in the Middle Atlantic states and New England were substantially better paid than workers in the South. This was due partly to the fact that more skilled workers were employed in the manufacture of finer textiles characteristic of the North. Partly it was due to the generally depressed wages for all manufacturing work in the South, a phenomenon little changed in our own time.[27] But region of residence had an effect on newspaper reading beyond the underlying differences in income. This effect

is hidden by the contradictory effect of nationality. When the effects of income and nationality are controlled, the differences in newspaper buying between New England and the Middle Atlantic states largely disappear, but not so for the South. Southerners still spent considerably less, with the effects of income and nationality removed.[28]

The impact of region on newspaper buying habits, of course, extended beyond cotton textile workers. The 1890 census reports that per capita newspaper circulation was much higher in the North than in the South. For the states in my sample, the number of residents per copy of all newspapers published was 0.44 for the Middle Atlantic states, 0.88 for New England, and 5.99 for the South. In other words, there were more newspapers than people in the North, while in the South there were nearly six people for every paper.[29] It seems that Southerners, who were usually native Americans, tended to spend less on newspapers than native Americans in the North, even controlling for income. The reasons for this phenomenon are complex and have much to do with the peculiar political, economic, educational, and racial history of the ante-bellum South. Because of that history, industrial workers in the South after the Civil War were almost always native whites, poorly educated, poorly paid, and poorly integrated into the industrial culture of the New South. The South remained rural, even in its manufacturing. Southern cotton mills in 1890 were significantly smaller and more widely dispersed than Northern mills.[30] Newspapers are urban institutions; Southern industries were not.

Nationality of birth is the third broad family variable that, when considered superficially, seems not very much related to reading behavior. Immigrant families in the sample spent a little more on newspapers and books, but their average family incomes were higher. (If that seems strange, remember that most of the native Americans in the sample were in the poorly paid South.) Overall, both immigrants and natives spent about the same proportions of their

incomes on reading materials.[31] These broad similarities, however, gloss over some underlying differences caused by contradictory regional effects. When immigrant versus native expenditures on reading are broken down by region and income, it is clear that nationality makes a difference. With the influence of the South removed, natives tended to spend more than immigrants at all income levels.[32] The most striking nationality groups in my sample were the native Southerners and the immigrant New Englanders. Both were very low spenders on newspapers and books. Not only did native Southerners spend less than their Northern counterparts with similar incomes, but fully one-third of them in the sample had no expenditures at all for reading -- compared to less than one-fifth of the native Northerners. Like the native Southerners, the immigrant New Englanders spent very little on reading, and about one-third had no expenditures at all for newspapers or books.

The reading behavior of native Southerners, as I have already suggested, was related to a variety of historical forces that made the South such a distinctive region in America, even after the Civil War. These poor white workers were new to an industrial system that had not yet acquired a permanent working class culture. They were cultural transients -- though, of course, many were destined to stay. The low spending behavior of New England immigrants is traceable almost entirely to the French Canadians. Their reading expenditures were extremely low, much lower than any other nationality.[33] They spent an average of $1.29 per year for newspapers and books, nearly three dollars less than average, even though their average family income was $783, more than $100 above average. All the French Canadians in the sample worked in New England mills, and they were recognized by 1890 as an unusual ethnic contingent in the polyglot textile industry of that region. The greatest influx of French Canadians into the industry came between 1870 and 1890. They tended to be quite clannish about marriage, church, and other group values and behaviors, and they frequently

returned to Quebec after a stint in the American mills. In the cotton industry, at least, they were more transient than other groups, which may account for their lack of interest in buying newspapers. Forty-three French and six French/English newspapers were published in the United States in 1890. Cotton workers, it seems, bought few of them.[34] Viewed together, the behavior of the Southern natives and the French Canadians perhaps suggests a connection between newspaper reading and a feeling of arrival, of permanence, of involvement with the surrounding culture -- whether native or immigrant.

Questions about income, region, and nationality are important group-level questions, and these three factors had an impact on reading behavior. But the family-level data in Wright's 1891 report also allow for the study of more individual family attributes. Was reading related to family life cycle, such as age of parents and children or size of the family? Was family life style important? In other words, in what ways was reading related to other discretionary expenditures in the family budget? What role did newspapers or books play in the family circle?

The life cycle of a nineteenth-century family unfolded into fairly regular income and consumption patterns. From Wright's 1890-91 survey, it seems that a workingman's income tended to rise steadily from adolescence to age 30 to 40, declining thereafter. Total family income, however, usually peaked when the husband was in his fifties, with the addition to the labor force of his home-dwelling children and perhaps his wife.[35] Thus, age of family was associated with income and, through income, with newspaper reading. When the effects of income are removed, however, family life cycle variables seem largely unrelated to reading behavior. Neither age of husband nor age of wife nor age of oldest child showed a significant partial correlation with expenditures on newspapers and books. Reading expenditures also were not associated in my sample with school expenses, showing no positive correlation with number of children in

school, controlling again for income. In fact, the reverse possibly was true. Reading expenditures were slightly negatively related to total number of children (whether in school or not). The partial correlation, controlling for income, was -.16, a statistically significant but extremely weak association. In short, I could find no indication in my sample that newspaper reading among cotton workers was the habit of a particular age group and little indication that it was associated with family size, except through the effects of income.

Perhaps the most interesting questions about newspaper reading have to do with what I have called life style variables. What kind of an expenditure was the family's outlay for newspapers and books? This sort of question has been increasingly important to historians in recent years in their efforts to understand the impact of large social forces such as industrialization and urbanization on the common people of nineteenth-century America. This concern with everyday life has brought together historians from the sub-fields of labor history, social history, women's history, historical demography, and history of the family.[36] In a classic 1973 essay, Herbert Gutman suggests that the American working class, both native and immigrant, was only gradually and with much travail brought under the discipline of the clock and the machine in the nineteenth century. Over many decades, while they adjusted to new work habits and the life style of industry and city, workingmen and their families clung to at least some of their pre-industrial habits and behaviors. The work ethic came hard, and for many it came long after the publication of Ben Franklin's autobiography.[37] Some family historians have mined census records and other quantitative historical data to try to measure and compare the changing economic responses of American families to their changing environment. John Modell, for example, using data from Wright's 1875 and 1890-91 surveys, found that during that era both American and Irish families increased what he calls their "prudential" expenditures, for such things as organization

memberships and insurance. Yet, at the same time, "indulgent" expenditures on alcohol and tobacco, which he views as a pre-industrial cultural response to crisis, also remained high. In this and other ways, individual families exhibited traits of both the industrial and the pre-industrial cultures.[38]

I tried to determine from my sample whether expenditure on newspapers and books was an "education" type of expense or a "diversion" type of expense. It seems that reading could have played either of these two roles, and an understanding of which role it may have played for working-class families in 1890 could tell us something about the function of the newspaper in the industrial revolution.

In brief, my analysis suggests that reading was more a diversion than an educational or self-improvement behavior among cotton textile workers in the late nineteenth century. First, reading expenses showed no correlation with number of children in school, when controlling for income and total number of children. The ratio of children in school to total number of children was the only real measure of educational interest that I could fashion from the survey data, but in that era and that context, this was a fair indication of family commitment to education. I also found very little association between reading and expenditures for organizations, churches, or charities -- items which I interpreted as reflecting a commitment to self-improvement or religious or political involvement, if not exactly to education directly. On the other hand, in every kind of analysis I performed that compared discretionary expenses, I found the strongest relationship between reading expenditures and expenditures on amusements and vacations. This correlation is not terribly large (.35 is the simple Pearson R), but it is stronger than any other, and it does not disappear when controls are introduced on income, family size, kids in school, or region of residence. Reading seemed to be a family diversion -- like an outing, a picnic, or a vacation. It was not associated in my sample, however, with private

indulgences, such as alcohol and tobacco.[39]

VI

This little study of the family budgets of 300 cotton textile workers in 1890 does not reveal very much about the role of newspapers in the transformation of American life in the late nineteenth century. Mainly it confirms the expected -- that reading was related to income, region, and nationality. It only begins to suggest something interesting about the role that reading played in working-class families in 1890 -- that it was more a diversion or amusement than a form of education or self-improvement or political or religious involvement. To say much more than this, a larger and more comparative study is needed. The 1890-91 survey contains material for more precise comparisons across industries, ethnic groups, and budget categories. Other family budget surveys offer some opportunities for comparisons across time. This paper, a quick glance back into the past at a small collection of cotton workers, is merely to suggest what might be done.

The use of historical labor statistics for journalism history, it should be obvious, is no panacea. As data sources, these old surveys are frequently unreliable, sometimes uninterpretable, and on occasion unavailable. A modern survey researcher would throw up his hands at the sight of them. Yet they may be able to tell us some things about families and newspapers, perhaps some things that we could learn in no other way. The celebration of a particular kind of historical data, however, is not the aim of this paper. These surveys may turn out to be useful, or they may not. That is not the critical issue, for the availability of data is never the historian's chief constraint. The chief constraint always is the availability of good ideas. The idea of this paper is that a genuine social history of American newspapers requires the

study of consumers as well as producers, of readers as well as writers and publishers. If this is a good idea, the data can be found to pursue it.

# # # #

NOTES

[1]Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America (4th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 224-25. The Emery approach in this matter is fairly typical of the standard works in journalism history.

[2]The belief that editors know too little about their readers is a commonplace notion today, and it is behind the millions of dollars that have been poured into "readership studies" by publishers in the past ten to twenty years.

[3]For brief summaries of the subject matter and the methods of the "new social history" see Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," in Michael Kammen, ed., The Past Before Us (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); J. Morgan Kousser, "Quantitative Social-Scientific History," in Kammen, ed., Past Before Us; and Lawrence Stone, "History and the Social Sciences in the Twentieth Century," in Charles F. Delzell, ed., The Future of History (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1977).

[4]Library history as a field of study in schools of library science is very much like journalism history in schools of journalism. The best guides to the methods and the literature of library history are Michael H. Harris, A Guide to Research in American Library History (2nd ed.; Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1974); Michael H. Harris and Donald G. Davis, eds., American Library History: A Bibliography (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); Rolland Stevens, ed., Research Methods in Librarianship: Historical and Bibliographical Methods (Urbana: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1971); and John David Marshall, ed., Approaches to Library History (Tallahassee: Journal of Library History, 1966). See also the annual reviews of the literature and the state of the art in the Journal of Library History.

[5]One of the more active practitioners of this approach is Michael Harris. His dissertation at Indiana University made extensive use of probate records and is summarized in Michael Harris, "Books on the Frontier: The Extent and Nature of Book Ownership in Southern Indiana, 1800-1850," Library Quarterly, 42 (1972), 416-30. See also Harris, Guide to Research, pp. 43-47.

[6]The traditional and the new literature of the history of literacy is reviewed in great detail in Harvey Graff, Literacy in History: An Interdisciplinary Research Bibliography (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1976; addendum, 1979).

[7]See especially Kenneth Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England (New York: Norton, 1974); and Harvey Graff, The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social

Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

[8]James Leiby, Carroll Wright and Labor Reform: The Origin of Labor Statistics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 4; Wendell D. MacDonald, "The Early History of Labor Statistics in the United States," Labor History, 13 (1972), 267-78.

[9]Leiby, Carroll Wright, chapt. 5. See also S.N.D. North, "The Life and Work of Carroll Davidson Wright," Quarterly Publications of the American Statistical Association, 11 (1908-09), 447-66.

[10]George J. Stigler, "The Early History of Empirical Studies of Consumer Behavior," The Journal of Political Economy, 42 (1954), 95-113, reprinted in Stigler, Essays in the History of Economics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). See also U.S., Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 23, "Studies of Family Living in the United States and Other Countries: An Analysis of Material and Method," by Faith M. Williams and Carle C. Zimmerman (Washington: Government Printing Office, December, 1935).

[11]Massachusetts, Bureau of the Statistics of Labor, Sixth Annual Report (Public Document No. 31, March, 1875); U.S., Commissioner of Labor, Sixth Annual Report (1890); U.S., Commissioner of Labor, Seventh Annual Report (1891).

[12]Wright's results have been checked and his methods seem fairly sound. See John Modell, "Patterns of Consumption, Acculturation, and Family Income Strategies in Late Nineteenth-Century America," in Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, eds., Family and Population in Nineteenth-Century America (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 208-09. See also Carroll Wright, "A Basis for Statistics of Cost of Production," Proceedings of the American Statistical Association, 2 (1890-91), 157-77.

[13]See, for example, Illinois, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Third Bienniel Report, Part II (1884). Some of these surveys are reviewed by Stigler, "Early History of Empirical Studies," and Jeffrey Williamson, "Consumer Behavior in the Nineteenth Century: Carroll D. Wright's Massachusetts Workers in 1875," Explorations in Entrepreneurial History, 2nd series, 4 (1966-67), 125-29. A history of all the state bureaus of labor statistics is sketched in the Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor, 54 (1904).

[14]Williamson, "Consumer Behavior"; Peter Lindert, Fertility and Scarcity in America (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), chapt. 4; Peter Lindert, "Child Costs and Economic Development," in Richard A. Easterlin, ed., Population Change and Economic Growth in Developing Countries (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Michael R. Haines, "Industrial Work and the Family Life Cycle, 1889-1890," Research in Economic History, 4 (1979), 289-356; and Modell, "Patterns of Consumption."

[15]Emery and Emery, Press and America, chapts. 15-16.

[16]U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, Report on Manufacturing Industries in the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, Part III: Selected Industries, "Printing and Publishing" (1895), pp. 650-52, 62.

[17]Wright's Seventh Annual Report (1891) lists the budgets of more than 5,000

families in the cotton, woolen, and glass industries.

[18]The surveys are summarized in the Seventh Annual Report (1891), pp. 845-65. For notes on how the surveys were done, see Haines, "Industrial Work," pp. 292-95. In testing Wright's survey data against data from the 1890 census, Haines finds some differences in some areas such as age distributions. But overall he finds the survey data fairly representative.

[19]Census Office, Report on Manufacturing Industries: 1890, "Cotton Manufacture," pp. 171-73.

[20]Melvin Thomas Copeland, The Cotton Manufacturing Industry of the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1912), pp. 32-53. See also C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, 1951); and A. Galenson, "The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South, 1880 to 1930" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1975).

[21]The variables measured by Wright are listed in the Appendix. For working-class families the variable "newspapers and books" was likely mainly newspapers. This seems to have been the case in Wright's 1875 study as well as in a 1916 cost-of-living study in the District of Columbia. See William Ogburn, "Analysis of the Standard of Living in the District of Columbia in 1916," Publications of the American Statistical Association, 16 (1918-19), 374-92.

[22]Seventh Annual Report (1891), pp. 856-57; Census Office, "Printing and Publishing," p. 650; MacDonald, "Early History of Labor Statistics," p. 270.

[23]See Table 1.

[24]Wright's interviewers apparently assigned "nationality" labels on the basis of birthplace of the head of the household. I will generally distinguish only between native and foreign born in this paper, though I coded nationality as assigned by Wright.

[25]The main effects of both region and nationality on reading expenditure, with income as a covariate, show up as significant in analysis of variance.

[26]See Table 1. The average family expenditure for reading materials in Britain was $4.12. I computed all figures for Britain that I computed for the U.S., but for the sake of brevity I have not reported them in this paper.

[27]Census Office, "Cotton Manufacture," p. 174. See also Copeland, Cotton Manufacturing Industry, chapts. 3 and 17.

[28]This statement is based upon an analysis of variance and multiple classification analysis, with income as a covariate.

[29]Census Office, "Printing and Publishing," p. 660.

[30]Census Office, "Cotton Manufacture," pp. 186-93; Copeland, Cotton Manufacturing Industry, chapt. 3.

[31]See Table 1.

[32]See Table 2. See also note #25.

[33]Most of the other nationalities had too few cases in the sample for me to say much about them individually.

[34]Copeland, Cotton Manufacturing Industry, pp. 120-21; Census Office, "Printing and Publishing," p. 653.

[35]Haines, "Industrial Work," pp. 297-305. See also Tamara K. Hareven, "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle," Journal of Social History, 7 (1974), 322-29.

[36]See, for example, David Brody, "The Old Labor History and the New: In Search of an American Working Class," Labor History, 20 (1979), 111-26; Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); Daniel J. Walkowitz, Worker City, Company Town (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Maris A. Vinovskis, "Recent Trends in American Historical Demography: Some Methodological and Conceptual Considerations," Annual Review of Sociology, 4 (1978), 603-27; Charles E. Rosenberg, ed., The Family in History (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975); Hareven and Vinovskis, Family and Population; Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978); and Carl Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

[37]Herbert G. Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," American Historical Review, 78 (1973), 531-88. See also Herbert G. Gutman, Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

[38]Modell, "Patterns of Consumption," pp. 211-17.

[39]The link between expenditures on reading and amusements holds in multiple regression analysis as well as partial correlational analysis.

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APPENDIX

The Commissioner of Labor's Sixth Annual Report (1890) and Seventh Annual Report (1891) contain information or expenditure data for the following categories:

I. Description of the Family

1. State or Country of Residence
2. Nationality
3. Occupation of Husband
4. Whether Wife Works
5. Number of Children at Work, Home, and School
6. Number of Boarders
7. Total Number in Family
8. Age of Husband and Wife
9. Sex and Ages of Children
10. Whether Family Owns House and General Condition of House

II. Sources of Income

1. Income of Husband, Wife, and Children (separately)
2. Income from Boarders and Lodging
3. Other Income

III. Expenditures for Food

1. Amount Consumed and Cost of Each of these Items: Beef, Hog Products, Meat not Specified, Eggs, Lard, Butter, Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Molasses, Potatoes, Poultry, Fish, Milk, Flour and Meal, Bread, Rice, Cheese, Fruit, Condiments, Vegetables not Specified, and Food not Specified
2. Total Expenditures for Food

IV. Expenditures Other than Food

1. Number of Rooms and Rent Paid
2. Amount Used and Cost of Fuel and Lighting
3. Expenditures for Each of these Items: Husband's Clothing, Wife's Clothing, Children's Clothing, Furniture and Utensils, Taxes, Life Insurance, Property Insurance, Organizations, Religion, Charity, Newspapers and Books, Amusements and Vacation, Liquor, Tobacco, Sickness and Death, and Other
4. Total Non-Food Expenditures

TABLE 1

Average Family Income, Average Expenditures for Newspapers and Books, and Average Proportion of Expenditures for Newspapers and Books Broken Down by Income Level, Region, and Nationality

Category	Average Income	Newspapers and Books	% for N & B	(N)
I. Income Level				
High	$1,021.90	$6.14	.60%	(100)
Middle	596.31	4.42	.74	(102)
Low	378.33	2.06	.54	(98)
II. Region				
New England	$776.73	$3.81	.49%	(75)
Mid-Atlantic	833.25	6.05	.73	(75)
South	520.61	2.92	.56	(75)
Britain	529.20	4.12	.78	(75)
III. Nationality				
Native Am.	$593.38	$4.09	.69%	(118)
Immigrant	839.03	4.44	.53	(107)
Briton	529.20	4.12	.78	(75)
IV. Total	$663.95	$4.22	.64%	(300)

Source: Sample of 300 cotton textile workers drawn from U.S., Commissioner of Labor, Seventh Annual Report (1891).

TABLE 2

Expenditures on Newspapers and Books, Broken Down by Nationality; by Nationality and Region; and by Nationality, Region, and Income

Category	by Nat'lity	by Nat'lity & Region	by Nat'lity & Region & Income	(N)
I. Native Am.	$4.09			
A. New England		$5.12		
1. Low			$2.86	(7)
2. Middle			5.40	(5)
3. High			8.00	(5)
B. Mid-Atlantic		$6.74		
1. Low			$3.75	(4)
2. Middle			5.38	(8)
3. High			8.27	(15)
C. South		$2.88		
1. Low			$1.43	(36)
2. Middle			4.20	(27)
3. High			4.45	(11)
II. Immigrant	$4.44			
A. New England		$3.42		
1. Low			$0.48	(9)
2. Middle			3.56	(18)
3. High			4.20	(31)
B. Mid-Atlantic		$5.67		
1. Low			$2.00	(3)
2. Middle			4.53	(17)
3. High			6.75	(28)
C. South		$5.00		
2. Middle			$5.00	(1)

Source: Sample of 300 cotton textile workers drawn from U.S., Commissioner of Labor, Seventh Annual Report (1891).